THE WORKERS'

DREADNOUGHT

Socialism, Internationalism, Votes for All.

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INCIDENTS OF PRISON LIFE - - By P. J. Dollan

Prison life is not all gloom. It has its gleams of sunshine, rare, but always treasured in the memory. These gleams of sunshine come differently to each prisoner, according to temperament. Thus, there were two prisoners near me who used to relieve the monotony of their existence by writing sonnets with their needles on scraps of paper and exchanged them with each other for mutual criticism. Another prisoner was in the habit of writing letters on his slate to all kinds of persons, and many a time he broke the Defence of the Realm Act writing open letters to the political darlings of the multitude. I myself have received letters from comrades in prison which I was never able to answer because of the lack of postal facilities. In various ways the discipline was outwitted to carry messages from one prisoner to another. Political news travelled like wildfire, and the methods of communication were as ingenious as they were varied. As some of them may still be in use it will be advisable not to detail them here. On one occasion I had the pleasure of reading a copy of the "Daily Telegraph" containing full accounts of the attitude of Labour towards the proposed Stockholm Conference, and I was able to summarise the contents and by various devices passed on the information to others who were interested. Once also I was the fortunate finder of a "C.O.s Hansard" full of news of importance to us in prison.

These two literary finds would have got me into trouble if they had been discovered by the officials, but fortunately they were kept secret among the prisoners. The news thus obtained made me a person much sought after at exercise by Socialists thirsting for political knowledge. At that time all the prisoners thought we were on the eve of Peace, and the excitement, though subdued, was intense. Every new arrival was eagerly questioned thus: "Any news of Peace?" but, alas! their hopeful forecasts have not yet been realised. The news of Mr. Henderson's resignation from the Cabinet was learned generally the day after it occurred, and the interest it aroused was soon lost in the greater excitement caused by a rumour that Russia and Germany had made a separate Peace. Another time it was learned that Lloyd George had declared in favour of Peace by Negotiation, and that a conference of the warring nations was to be held in Paris to adjust terms!

Reading is the principal relaxation in prison, and for the first month is confined to the most human of all books—the Bible. I got through the Bible twice from cover to cover, and contrived to read several distinctive parts several times. After the first month we were allowed three books a fortnight; after the second month five. I was very lucky in the books that came my way. Among them were all the plays of Shakespeare in one volume; Emerson's Essays; Plutarch's Lives; Don Quixote; Wordsworth's Poems; Bagshot's Literary Studies; novels by Lytton, Blackmore, Dickens, Scott; the letters of Earl Lytton; and a sixpenny dictionary. The latter was great fun, and in parts was more entertaining than Don Quixote, which deserves to be the most humorous book ever written. These books were mostly new to me, and thanks to them I enjoyed a literary education in prison which a busy life had always denied me before. Dickens was dismal prison reading, and I could not stand him for long. Emerson was a great consolation and Plutarch was an inspiration. Reading Plutarch's "Lives" in prison was to live in the times of the great Greeks and Romans, and I trod the streets of Athens and Rome with the best of them. Socialists will find much of interest in Plutarch, including accounts of the first strike and the first guilds known in history. Also in the life of Cato the Younger they will find an example of civic courage and devotion unknown in this commercial age. Cato the Younger should be the patron saint of all rebels.

There were no mice in prison to make friends with, but I was fortunate to get on terms of intimacy with a few sparrows who came to see me morning and night, and incidentally to eat the crumbs of bread I saved for them. These sparrows came as regularly as the morning, and were led by a chubby little rascal whom I named "The Socialist" because when the crumbs were put out on the window spar he was the first to arrive; and always he chirped on his mates to come and share the grub. He and another sparrow often came into the cell and eat their crumbs on the top of the corner cupboard; the others were content to admire me from the window spar, but sometimes, just to show they were not afraid, they would fly in at one open pane of the window and out by another. I learned from an official that the sparrows always lived well at the prison until this year, when, owing to the reductions in rations, they have had a precarious existence because of the scarcity of crumbs. Consequently, prison sparrows, like conscientious objectors, have been suffering a reduced dietary.

When we were on association labour it was sometimes possible to steal a chat with a comrade, and in this way I have known discussions to take place on varied subjects ranging from the "advantages of a separate Peace for Russia" to "the universalism of Emerson." The overseer in our association shed was popularly regarded as a rotter and repressed sternly all attempts at familiarity, but his sternness only prompted the prisoners to employ extraordinary skill in outwitting him. He was apparently the youngest of all the warders and the worst. It required great effort to maintain one's conscientious objection to the use of force when dealing with him. He was about the most obnoxious person I have met in my time. The other warders with whom I came in contact were in the main decent fellows who carried out their duties with the minimum of harshness. Two or three warders were actually kind in their attitude towards us, and made it obvious where their sympathies lay. It was almost nice to be a prisoner under their control. The superior officials were strict, but civil, and at all times were open to hear complaints or give information re routine or privileges. The chaplain was a Government Christian who carried out his duties as if Christ had been a prison commissioner. As I preferred to study the scenery of the clouds rather than attend chapel I was spared the doubtful privilege of hearing his sermons, which I have been informed were as dull as a prison wall.

Most prisoners in their cells amused themselves at night by humming tunes, but there was one brave lad who defied the rule against singing daily. This boy sang several Scottish songs nightly, and usually concluded his concert with "England, Arise" or "The Red Flag." On one occasion he caused great fun by chanting "God Save the King," and that, no doubt, was as grave an offence as singing the hymns of rebellion. I never got to know the singer, but I learned that, though his vocal efforts kept him continually in "punishment," it did not still his song. He was a boy who would have sung a hymn of defiance on the scaffold a minute prior to his execution. His spirit could not be shut up within prison walls. There was another prisoner who whistled despite the rule against warbling, and I think his violation of prison etiquette was never proved against him. On Saturday evenings a choir came and cheered us up with their spirited renderings of Socialist songs, and on one occasion they sang in a storm of rain and wind as blithely as if they had been choristers revelling in the sunshine of a June morning. On behalf of many grateful prisoners I tender thanks to that choir, and trust their song will never grow hoarse. They indeed brought a lump of sunshine to the prison, and their singing made us feel we had friends in the world across the wall.

Of Special Interest This Week

Mistaken Ideals.
The Montessori Method
By Muriel Matters.

WHY I CANNOT BE A C.O.

By J. E. FRANCIS.

I have argued with more than one C.O. and Pacifist who commands my respect for his ideals and his conduct in other matters, hoping thereby either to become a C.O. myself—a rôle I should like to have the conviction necessary to fill properly—or that, having altered the opinion of someone (whom, differing from, I was still proud to call my friend) I might feel greater confidence in my present attitude. I have gained neither satisfaction.

I am, however, a conscientious objector—and hope every day to become a more strenuous one—to actions which make strife inevitable.

I visualise the position of the world before the War as a big dining-hall. High tables in different parts of the room are overloaded with luxuries. The people at these tables had eaten to repletion; but, except for a few exceptions, were guarding like snarling dogs what they could not consume. I do not suggest that the measure of disgusting greediness was equal in all cases, but there was no high table that could be regarded with other than dislike by anyone believing in Christian economy.

Below these high tables were ranged other tables at which were seated those who had sufficient, but the majority of whom were greedily watching for an opportunity of pushing their way to the higher table. The floor round the tables was covered by a mass of humanity, most of whom were either struggling for sufficient sustenance or to get a place at a table.

At certain times the consuming people had to desist in order to look to the replenishment of their stocks of food, but the amount of time given to this last was in inverse ratio to the amount on the table, and all, except those at the heads of the high tables, had to contribute the greater part of what they obtained to those whose position was better than their own.

Suddenly one of those seated at one of the high tables (who but a minute previously had been "taking wine" with those at other high tables) rose, and, commanding those about him to follow, made a grab at what was on some of the other tables.

Immediately the heads of other tables called on those about them to withstand the onslaught and retaliate by a counter-invasion. I was seated at one of the lower tables—one not immediately menaced. What was I to do? I was convinced that the instigators of the raid would not stop if they were successful in overcoming those they first attacked, and I felt it my duty to offer to help drive the raiders away from the first table attacked because it was numerically the weakest.

A C.O. will probably object that I have not faced the argument of the sacredness of human life. I would suggest that for one body maimed or killed in war, dozens of souls are destroyed in what we call the days of peace. Until we stop this last violence, we cannot properly get forward with more important matters. The C.O. will say, "You become a devil yourself in order to cast out another devil." I admit the extreme danger; I do not admit that it is yet a fact.

I totally disagree with the treatment of the C.O. A few days before Lord Hugh Cecil made the suggestion in the House of Commons, I had published an article in which it was suggested that C.O.s ought to be allowed to leave the country, though I think it would have been right to deprive them of all but the bare necessities of the journey. Where could they have gone? Well, there are still spots outside the war zone where they could have lived "by the sweat of the brow." If any C.O. suggests that that would have been an undeserved punishment, I would ask him whether he is really convinced that he or anyone had done all that was possible to prevent this War. Can any of us escape some measure of condemnation? No; all the nations and all the individuals in the nation are guilty—not equally guilty. England less than others, and perhaps mostly in the fact that her internal dissensions were Germany's temptation.

Finally, I agree that force is no argument, but if you will pamper individuals until they run amok, then the time for argument has passed until you have the offenders under some sort of control again.

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MISTAKEN IDEALS

We understand that the tables and the people seated at them, described in the allegory "Why I Cannot be a Conscientious Objector," are supposed to represent the Governments of the nations; the "high tables" "overloaded with luxuries" being the Governments of the Great Empires which hold dominion over many subject nationalities, and the "other tables, at which were seated those who had sufficient," representing the Governments of the nations which rule moderately within their borders and have no subject dependencies. At first we hesitated to decide upon this interpretation, because the author says: "I was seated at one of the lower tables," and Mr. Francis, as an Englishman, belongs to an empire on the subject dominions of which "the sun never sets." In the acquisition of those dominions Britain has fought a long series of "Little Wars" extending from generation to generation. In the effort to maintain those dominions, and in the fear of losing them entertained by successive Governments, our people have been plunged into great wars. We should feel that we were doing Mr.. Francis's knowledge and judgment an injustice in assuming this to be his meaning were it not for the fact that later on he says: "All the nations . . . are guilty . . . England less than others, and perhaps mostly in the fact that her internal dissensions were Germany's temptation." Mr. Francis perhaps refers here to Ireland, but has he considered the subject people of India who plead for Home Rule? This plea is held by the present Government to be so wicked that Mrs. Besant was interned for voicing it and the London offices of the Home Rule for India League were recently raided. According to the Famine Commissioners' Report on the famine of 1877-8, in which 5,220,000 people died of famine in Southern India, over 16,000,000 cwts. of rice, which could have saved them, were exported from Calcutta to foreign markets, because it paid to do so. Mr. A. J. Wilson, of the "Investor's Review," has estimated that £30,000,000 a year is drained out of India by way of interest to foreign bondholders and civil and military pensions to Anglo-Indians. Eighty per cent. of the Indian taxes is raised from the land of the peasants; 75 per cent. of the harvest goes in taxes. The Government of India spends 1½d. a head of the population on education, 1s. a head on the Army. Did Mr. Francis read the report of the new Governor-General of Ceylon on the massacres of 1915 there, in which he stated that the man selected by the military authorities to deal with a religious squabble between two sections of natives construed his instructions "as a commission to administer lynch law?" Has Mr. Francis heard of the horrible system of indenture of Indian labourers in the tropics?

These things alone should show that British people merely shut their eyes to facts when they assume that *their* country is less guilty than others.

But it will be said that the annexation of India and Ceylon took place long ago, and that their administration now being a matter of purely internal concern, is not a matter to provoke other nations to war. Therefore, let Mr. Francis consider later happenings. Let him consider the occupation of Egypt. As Lord Cromer has said, its origin was "financial." To protect the interests of usurous bondholders, mainly British, who had lent money to the Khedive (the Bible wisely condemns the usurers beyond all others), Egypt was placed under the dual control of France and Britain. The dual control in 1877, a year of famine, actually collected the taxes in advance from the hungry peasants in order to secure the interest for Lord Rothschild and the other bondholders. When Arabi Pasha and other brave Egyptians succeeded in establishing a Nationalist Ministry aiming at Parliamentary Government on the European model, Sir Edward Malet in Egypt complained to the British Government at home that the influence of the dual financial control was "daily decreasing." To safeguard that control and the dividends it was established to protect, British warships soon after bombarded Alexandria, the Egyptian Parliament was destroyed, and the British occupation of Egypt began. The French did not agree to these measures; their ships sailed away from Alexandria as the British ships opened fire. The British Government had suggested the occupation of Egypt by Turkey, not by Britain, and the Concert of Europe had agreed! The French Government was annoyed by the British breach of faith, French capitalists being angry at getting no share of the spoils, especially as French influence had hitherto been dominant in Egypt. The Fashoda incident was an outcome of this state of feeling. The Turkish Government, too, was estranged. Britain, it seems, has many "high tables," and, as the allegory indicates, the masses of humanity around the high tables are struggling for food. The Egyptian people dwell in mud huts and work for wages amounting to from 7½d. to 10½d. a day for an adult and 6d. a day for a child.

After Egypt came Morocco. France agreed to leave Britain to occupy Egypt provided that Britain would permit France to do as she chose in Morocco, whose mountains, by the way, are rich in iron ore like the Saar basin in Germany to the left of the Rhine. In 1901 M. Delcassé, the French Foreign Secretary, opened secret negotiations with Spain for a Franco-Spanish division of Morocco, and in the same year signed a declaration of the French Government's respect for the integrity of Morocco. In 1902 the British Government, hearing of the Franco-Spanish bargain, protested privately; but in 1904 Britain settled the old Egyptian quarrel with France by a secret agreement to support the Franco-Spanish designs on Morocco. In 1905 the German Emperor, hearing rumours of these things, called at Tangiers and there stated that he would protect German interests in Morocco, and that he regarded the Sultan as "an absolutely independent sovereign." Germany demanded an international Conference on Moroccan affairs. Eventually the Conference was held at Algeciras in 1906, and "in the name of God Almighty," Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, U.S.A., France, Britain, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Russia and Sweden signed an Act "based upon the threefold principle of the sovereignty and independence of His Majesty the Sultan, the integrity of his dominions, and economic liberty without any inequality." In 1911 French and Spanish troops poured into Morocco, and Germany sent the gunboat Panther to Agadir as a protest, not so much against the subjection of Morocco: Germany did not care for that, but in the interests of her capitalists and traders there. After much recrimination, France and Germany showed signs of composing their differences, but "The Times," Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Lloyd George objected, and the nations came very near to war. Eventually the quarrel was patched up, but Germany had got the worst of it, and her capitalists were dissatisfied. The signatories to the Algeciras Act, who, at the time of signing, were treacherously contracting engagements to destroy it, now pose as upholders of international honour!

After the subjection of Egypt and Morocco came the subjection of Persia, and this time by Anglo-Russian agreement. On September 4th, 1907, the British representative informed the Persian Foreign Office that this agreement was based "on a guarantee of Persia's independence and integrity." The Persians were assured that the two Powers hoped that Persia would be "for ever delivered from the fear of foreign intervention" and left "perfectly free to manage her affairs in her own way."

In spite of this, Russia again and again sent punitive expeditions into Persia to hinder the legitimate efforts of the Persians to free themselves from the domination of despotic rulers. Russia and Britain prevented the employment by the Persian Government of Captain Stokes, an ex-British Military Attaché, and Russia ordered the dismissal by the Persian Government of Mr. Morgan Shuster, an American financial expert who had been appointed to take charge of the Treasury, and demanded such pledges as would have ended Persian independence. When the Persian Parliament refused to assent, Russian troops captured the city of Tabriz and admitted a general of the ex-Shah, who had long besieged the city, and who now became its Governor with the approval of the British Consul. Russian officials hanged the Persian leaders. The Shah's general mutilated and tortured Persians and Armenians. Women and children and non-combatants were not spared. These things took place so lately as December, 1911, and January, 1912, and photographs of the dead and mutilated have been published. Russia thus acquired a sphere of influence in the North of Persia, Britain in the South, a neutral sphere lay between; but since Russia possessed the seat of Government, no part of Persia could be called free. The Russian Socialist Government has now published a Memorandum dated February 21st, 1917, which sets forth an agreement between Russia, France and Britain, one of the provisions of which was that Britain was to have the neutral zone in Persia with the exception of two towns on the border, Ispahan and Yezd, which were to belong to Russia.

We have not space this week to trace out the annexations planned by the many secret documents revealed by the Russian Socialist Government. We believe that no one reading them intelligently can fail to realise that the Governments of all the Great Powers have been scheming and manœuvring to annex as much territory as possible, and especially the territories rich in rubber, iron, coal, gold, oil, or other valuable raw material.

The War, in our view, has arisen from this rivalry, in which Britain has led the way and secured the greatest number of prizes. All the Great Powers have for years past looked with covetous eyes to the Balkan States, to the Turkish Empire, and to the remainder of Persia, all too weak to withstand the onslaught of a fully-equipped modern Military or Naval Power. All the Great Powers manœuvred for these prizes. Russia sounded Germany on the one hand, France and Britain on the other to discover which Ally would be most complacent to her demands. Italy, too, bargained with both camps. Britain, from being anti-, became pro-Russian. Armaments mounted in preparation for the coming struggle. To divide Britain and France, Bismarck assented to Britain's annexation of Egypt. In face of Britain's great Navy and the powerful combination of Britain, France, Russia and Spain, Germany allowed herself to be outdone in Morocco. The questions diplomatists asked before this War were whether Germany and Austria would allow themselves to be thrust aside when the Near East came to be despoiled; or whether some general agreement could be arrived at? Germany was pursuing peaceful penetration, making friends, not annexations in the Near East. Austria took Bosnia-Herzegovina, her demands upon Serbia bore a familiar resemblance to the demands of Russia upon Persia. Austria was probably preparing to annex Serbia. That Russia and the Powers allied with her would not permit; for it would conflict with their own aims. So came the War; Russia and Austria mobilised. Did the German Emperor take fright or was he told by the capitalists of Germany that he must fight in their interests? The trial of General Yanushkevich last September revealed the fact that, though he was ordered by the Czar to cancel the general Russian mobilisation order on the ground that it would cause war and non-mobilisation would prevent war with Germany; Yanushkevitch yet proceeded to arrange the general mobilisation. Once Russia and Germany were at war, France was bound by agreement to aid Russia, Britain to aid France. So half the world was soon embroiled. Mr. Francis, in his allegory, tells us that those who had been feasting at *one* of the high tables made a grab at one of the other tables; but in our reading of the case a simultaneous rush was made by the diners at several high tables, and several lower tables were overturned or robbed of their food in the process.

Mr. Francis, a modest diner at the British table, regarding only the German onslaught on Belgium, was "convinced that the instigators of the raid would not stop if they were successful in overcoming those whom they first attacked." He felt it his duty to help to drive them away. Was it not his duty to take action when the Government of his own country connived at the attack on Morocco and Persia?

People prefer not to admit that the subjection and massacre of Moors and Persians can be compared with the invasion of neighbouring countries like Belgium, but it must be realised that this clash of European armies and the consequent invasion of European countries is the outcome of competition between the Powers for the possession of the territories inhabited by Eastern and African peoples.

Mr. Francis has suggested that Conscientious Objectors should be allowed to leave the country; he thinks that they should be deprived of all but the bare necessities of the journey. Should any C.O. object that the punishment is undeserved, Mr. Francis will ask him whether he or anyone did all that was possible to prevent the War? We must ask why exile with bare necessities is to be reserved for C.O.s of military age, since, as Mr. Francis suggests, few people, if any, did *all* that was possible to prevent the War? Moreover, the C.O. is entitled to reply that the past is gone, but that he desires freedom to do everything possible to bring the War to an end.

In conclusion, we reply to Mr. Francis that we have a conscientious objection to taking part in the War because we believe it to be an ignoble and mercenary battle of thieves. We take our stand on the Russian declaration: "No annexations, no indemnities, the right of the peoples to decide their own destiny."

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

The Best New Year's Gift is "The Dreadnought." 6/6 per annum, post free.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

CONSCRIPTION BANNED!

The majority in Australia declines Conscription, we are glad to note. Labour has made its voice heard. Will the British trade unions be equally successful when the "comb-out" question is put to them? Will they countenance conscribing youths of 17?

THE CENSORSHIP OF OPINION

In regard to the new D.O.R.A. regulations, the W.S.F. looks neither to the right nor to the left!

WELL DONE, FRIENDS!

The Executive body of the Society of Friends has decided to continue to issue literature on War and Peace, without submitting it to the Censor, and has stated its conviction that the recent regulation requiring the submission to the Censor of all leaflets dealing with the War and the making of Peace is a grave danger to the national welfare, and that the duty of every good citizen to express his thoughts on the affairs of his country is hereby endangered; and further, that Christianity requires the toleration of opinions not our own lest we should unwittingly hinder the workings of the Spirit of God. They add that it is for Christians a paramount duty to be free to obey and to act and speak in accord with the law of God, a law higher than that of any State, and no Government official can release men from this duty.

The Christian Peace Crusade states that Clause 27c of the Defence of the Realm Regulations, if unrepealed, may force its members to become subject to penalties which they will not seek to evade, but which will inevitably lower the historical prestige and reputation of the country as the guardian of liberty of conscience and of religious freedom.

THE REVISION OF THE STATE-CONSTITUTION IN HOLLAND

At last the final stage has been reached, and on December 12th we witnessed the proclamation of the new Constitution, which brings us an electoral reform with proportional representation, manhood suffrage, compulsory voting, and for women only eligibility. This announcement was greeted with great applause when read out by the Mayor, but the women, the governed, not governing half of the people, have not refrained from uttering their dissatisfaction. All the leading newspapers, with only two exceptions, contained letters from women who protested against the tyranny of taxation and legislation without representation; the legal rule of one sex over both sexes is continued, and the resources of the country in the present crisis are left in the hands of the men only.

No doubt the nation cannot fail to see the inconsistency of recognising the right of women to sit in Parliament whilst denying them a vote. It is for the Government that will come into power by next year's proportional election to remedy this mistake, since the new constitution admits the introduction of woman suffrage. Already three of the seven parties represented in the States-General are trying to nominate women for Parliament, and we may hope soon to see the Netherlands join the suffrage States of the world.

MARTINA G. KRAMERS.

PRICES IN PETROGRAD

In a letter from Petrograd dated November 10th which has just been received, and was written, of course, before the Bolshevik Revolution, the following record of prices is given:—

	According to pre-War Exchange rates. £ s. d.
Meat per lb. (a Russian lb. is only 14 oz.)...	0 5 0
Butter ,, ,, ,, ,, ...	0 12 0
Sugar ,, ,, ,, ,, ...	0 10 0
Chocolate ,, ,, ,, ,, ...	2 8 0
Potatoes ,, ,, ,, ,, ...	0 0 6
Eggs (each)	0 1 0
Ladies' boots per pair	15 0 0

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT

December 18th.—The injustice of calling up a man for military service and sending him back was instanced by Mr. King (L.). The case was that of a Russian Pole, who had been earning £5 a week; but was now dstitute owing to the action of the military authorities. He has a wife and three children to support. Inquiries were promised.

EVICTION OF SOLDIER'S MOTHER.

Mr. Trevelyan (L.) stated that a Mrs. Fraser, widow, nearly seventy, mother of a sergeant in the Canadian Artillery, was evicted recently at Invergordon during a snowstorm—her furniture being put out in the snow. Mr. Munro acknowledged the facts as correct but said the Government could not interfere. Surely this instance of barbarity goes one better than the so-called Hun?

THE METAL TRUST.

The Non-Ferrous Metal Industry Bill was considered in Committee. Efforts were made by Mr. Pringle (L.) and others to make the effect of the Bill less objectionable to British subjects. Licenses to trade in these metals must be applied for in every instance, Sir A. Stanley maintained. The measure must also come into force as soon as possible, because the country must be prepared. As Commander Wedgwood said, this Bill is not only a form of "extreme Protection," but will constitute in this country "a complete iron-bound trust for the metal industry." Licences will be necessary for "winning" these metals so that small people will either be debarred from this occupation or will be put to the trouble and probably the expense of procuring a license from the Board of Trade. It will mean that the people of Cornwall may discover metal, but be unable to handle it without a permit. What a prospect!

* * * *

National Health Insurance Bill was read a third time and passed.

POLICE RAIDS.

December 19th.—Mr. Macpherson informed Mr. Lees-Smith (L.) that there was no "Department of the War Office which exercises direct control" over raids under Regulation 51 of the Defence of the Realm Act. Mr. Lees-Smith, however, pointed out that the Home Secretary had previously stated that there is an officer in chief command at the War Office dealing with these matters. We should like to know who is right; that would at least be a clue to the recent petty persecution of societies of pacifist tendencies.

THE "POVERTY LINE."

Mr. Hogge (L.) drew attention to the official estimate of the Food Controller that the weekly cost of the voluntary ration of bread, meat, flour and sugar for a woman and one child was 15s. 3½d. The separation allowance for a woman and child is 19s. 6d., and the pension 18s. 9d.; therefore 4s. 2½d. and 3s. 5½d. respectively are all that remain for light, rent, fire, clothing, not to mention the other necessities of life not included in the ration. Mr. Bonar Law seemed to think that the statement that the cost of ration only amounted to half the sum mentioned settled the matter. Mr. Hogge contended that should the new calculation be correct yet these women and children were still within the "poverty line."

COST OF RATIONS.

Mr. Clynes accounted for the mistake in his last estimate for rationed foods by admitting that the person making the calculation mistook "a week for a fortnight"! We fear this disclosure is only one of many that might be made public about the Food Control Department. "Chaos" is the expression we have heard applied to that régime.

"CHARITABLE."

We quite agree with Mr. Billing that the word "charitable" is most objectionable to men who have given up everything for their country. Mr. Bonar Law refused to take any action to remove this expression from societies which deal with discharged soldiers and sailors. He seems to want to retain the old British scandal of leaving war heroes to the mercy of charity!

* * * *

Mr. Brace said that "no importance need be attached" to the statements made by Dean Inge.

WAR AIMS.

On the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill, the question of War Aims was discussed, not only by the Pacifists, but as Mr. Trevelyan said, by "the Moderate Party in the House." Mr. Balfour's reply contained the usual platitudes—he was only firm and definite in his protest against the idea that the Government wanted a kind of buffer State on the left bank of the Rhine. That idea "was never part of His Majesty's Government." It seems that France had a little arrangement all of her own! Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Trevelyan dwelt on the secret treaties and the effect of their disclosure. It was now an urgent matter to re-state the British war aims. But no reply was made. Mr. Trevelyan hinted that the Prime Minister is looking forward to another two or three years of war! Will the people let him?

ITALIAN TREATY.

December 20th.—In a secret treaty recently made with Italy, Mr. McKean (I.N.) alleged that Clause 15 of that treaty excluded the Pope from any power to bring about peace. Lord Robert Cecil contended that it meant that "the settlement of the actual terms of peace" should be left to the belligerents!

* * * *

The war bonus to Dockyard foremen has been increased to £50 per annum, overtime is paid for hours in excess of fifty-six hours weekly instead of sixty as hitherto.

PERSIA.

Mr. Bonar Law stated that the South Persia Rifles were introduced into Persia to ensure order and tranquility," in the interest both of Persia and Great Britain, whose trade in South Persia is considerable." We cannot be put off with this assurance having read the secret treaties.

EQUAL PAY.

Civil servants have been awarded a War bonus; where men are to get a 14s. bonus, women will get 9s. per week; in instances where the bonus is either 15 per cent., 12 per cent., or 10 per cent. of salary per annum with a stated minimum, two-thirds of said bonus is to be granted to women. We must insist that a woman has the same increase in cost of living and should therefore receive the same bonus as the men!

THE FAREWELL.

The motion for the adjournment was the occasion of a number of memorable speeches including that of the Prime Minister. Sir J. D. Rees (U.) distinguished himself by beseeching the Government not to define its war aims, "because to do it at this moment would mean approaching the enemy with a desire for peace." Mr. C. Edwards (L.) enumerated the mines and Ireland as possible places to procure man power. If Mr. Edwards is so very much in love with the War, that he cannot bear to think even of peace, we would recommend him to go out to the front himself! Major Davies (L.) pointed out that the secret treaties which had just been published had "left behind them a bad taste in people's mouths." Referring to the Germans he said, "it is not necessary, because they have done wrong, that we ought to do likewise." His great contention was that a League of Allied Nations should be formed now as a preliminary to the proposed League of Nations after the War! Mr. Lloyd George seemed played out, he could only refer to speeches he had made on former occasions, and quote them to prove how irreproachable the acts and aims of the Allies are. If what he predicted has not happened in the field it is all because Russia has made an armistice. To counteract this set-back more man-power is wanted With this aim in view, Sir A. Geddes is to meet the Trade Union leaders, on the result of that meeting Parliament, on January 14th, will introduce a Bill dealing with man-power. Will the Trade Unions be firm and tell the Government that there can be no further "comb-out?" They have it in their power to show that men are not inexhaustible; therefore if on no other account, negotiations should be started to conclude this wholesale slaughter. Mr. Lloyd George even mentioned the queues. They disturb him; he probably fears that people whilst waiting for food have time to think. As Mr. Adamson (Lab.) pointed out, you will find no duchesses in them. These people in queues think of the great inequality of sacrifice and that Mr. Adamson assured the House had taken away the enthusiastic spirit of the rank and file. Perhaps on these grounds some equality of distribution may be brought about. Mr. Asquith conveyed gently that the "win the War" men did not seem to be very successful. He advised them to concentrate on getting more ships rather than more men.

OUR WISH

The Editor and Staff of the WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT present their best wishes to its readers. May the New Year bring us Peace and Socialism. All will agree that we nust strive to obtain Peace this year, that not for an instant must we countenance the idea that another year of War is before us. We do not shrink from adding to our wish for Peace the bolder, more ambitious demand for Socialism which shall end all wars. Russia is preparing the way for Socialism—and why not England? We want Socialism now; our hearts long for it. We must consecrate ourselves to the work of obtaining it; we must prepare ourselves to be fitted to live in it. In art, in music, in literature, in the education of the child, movements are springing up which teach self-reliance and at the same time the spirit of co-operation. Such movements are the complement of the great political and economic awakening of the peoples which began slowly—very slowly—long ago. We must labour for its growth. We must believe ourselves a part of it, able to aid in bringing about its speedy consummation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR 1918

I wish to thank you all for your financial and other help to the W.S.F. in 1917, which has made it possible for us to carry on the work for Peace, Socialism, Votes for All, and the work we are doing through our three Clinics and Day Nursery for the mothers and babies in the Borough of Poplar. Your sympathy has been of great value to us, and has often heartened us to put forth renewed efforts, when the strain seemed almost too great to bear.

I appeal to you to continue your assistance, especially financial (which, naturally, in my official capacity, concerns me most), as an organisation cannot be carried on without funds, and we need them **now** if our work is to be effective and our objects attained. I hope that every reader of the WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT will join the W.S.F., as it is only by organisation and all being banded together that we can become a real force in the country. I hope that every member will make a New Year resolution to make at least 12 new members during 1918, and I shall be glad to receive any subscriptions that are in arrears. It saves postage to pay the 1s. 1d. in advance. I appeal especially for the General Fund and DREADNOUGHT Fund. The extra cost of the Christmas number was much heavier than we anticipated, as the printers were unable to obtain the ordinary paper and they had to use a superior quality.

One way of raising money is to sell the 1d. perfume cards which we have got, and I hope all those who can will apply to me for them; they are easy to sell, and are always in demand. Another way of helping is to take six copies of the paper weekly; there are still some Christmas numbers for sale. Every member should wear a W.S.F. badge, cost 2d. We also have some £1 collecting cards for the Peace Campaign, which I shall be glad to send on application for them.

One of our working women members in Bow gave 2s. 6d., and suggested that every member should give a New Year's present to the W.S.F., whatever he or she could afford or collect. This is an excellent suggestion, and I hope you will adopt it. We have much work before us, and we must co-operate in carrying it out. "Many hands make light labour." We must show the rich people who refused to subscribe to the War Aims Committee, though they were presumably in favour of it, that the workers will support their own movement without assistance from the Government or Bolo!

With best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous New Year, from

Yours sincerely,

NORAH L. SMYTH,

Hon. Financial Secretary.

ELECTRIC MACHINE BAKERY

91 BURDETT ROAD, MILE END

W. WOODS & SONS,

Family Bakers.

WAR ORIGIN.

Mr. Outhwaite (L.) reminded the House that it was the Czar's Government that was responsible for the War and stated: "On the 29th (July, 1914) the minister for War, the Chief of the Staff, acting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Russia secured the order for the general mobilisation of the Russian troops. At this point I would remind the House that our Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, had informed the Russian Government that a general mobilisation of the Army would be taken by Germany as a declaration of War. . . . ." He went on to say that Kerensky's Government had tried these men and sentenced them to penal servitude for life. Yet the old cock-and-bull story of Germany beginning the War gains credence!

Dr. Montessori and Her Educational Principles

By Muriel Matters

II.—THE PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT: THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE.

"When a method is applied to any positive science, it results in giving that science a new direction—that is to say, a new avenue of progress. And it is precisely in the course of advance along that avenue that the content of the science is formed; but if we never make the advance the science would never take its start."

Therefore, if our study be that of the child and if we are to follow the leading of other branches of science, it is evident that we must have a method peculiar to Pedagogy. We must first prepare the environment in which we shall be able to observe the object we are to study. And "if a new and scientific pedagogy is to arise from the *study of the individual*, such study must occupy itself with the observation of FREE children." Accordingly Montessori turned her attention to the question of a suitably prepared environment proportioned to the child's needs in every way. For only thus can the right method be established of observing "the liberty of the pupils in their spontaneous manifestation." It is clear that if there is a disproportion between the child and the contents of his environment there will follow some of the awkwardness and disorder so commonly associated with, and termed "characteristic" of, the behaviour of the young child.

In our experiment at the "Mothers' Arms," in which Miss Hildegard Gunn, and, later, Miss Pleasance Napier, assisted, we had two great initial drawbacks—lack of sufficient space and no garden. The latter is considered by Dr. Montessori as a most important part of the preparation of a children's house. She says: "In considering an ample playground, with space for a garden, as an important part of this school environment, I am not suggesting anything new. The novelty lies, perhaps, in my idea for the use of this open-air space, which is to be in direct communication with the school-room, so that the children may be free to go and come as they like, throughout the entire day."

Notwithstanding this lack, we set to work to make the best of the conditions, and we had many compensations. Foremost, we enjoyed complete liberty from interference, which some students have suffered from orthodox and rigid officials. This will be the sore trial of students who attempt to introduce the method anywhere under the old régime—for the new wine cannot be put into old bottles.

It is not the place to speak of the help of various friends and their enthusiasm, but we prepared our environment conscientiously according to our understanding of Dr. Montessori's principles. The tables and chairs were made small and light enough for the youngest children to lift easily. All knobs and latches on doors and cupboards were small enough for the little fingers to handle with facility. Pictures were hung low for their eager eyes to see, and all utensils, brooms, pans, dusters, were in miniature. The most successful of our improvisations was the long form which we commandeered from the receiving-room of the Clinic, and converted into a washing bench, on which were placed small basins and jugs, with accompanying soap dishes, tooth-brush jars and towels. We have since added to the back ledge of this invaluable article of furniture small pigeon-holes, numbered as receptacles for each child's toilet requisites.

When our labour was completed, we took from the nursery seven children of different ages, of course under five years. The subsequent studies of those and other children will, I hope, make interesting reading at some future time.

"The first step which we must take in our method is to *call* to the pupil. We call now to his attention, now to his interior life, now to the life he leads with others. Making a comparison, which must not be taken in a literal sense—it is necessary to proceed as in experimental psychology or anthropology when one makes an experiment—that is, after having prepared the instrument (to which in this case the environment may correspond), we prepare the subject. Considering the method as a whole, we must begin our work by preparing the child for the forms of social life, and we must attract his attention to these forms." For we have not only to educate the child in the ordinary scholastic sense, but we have to fit him to take his place in the social scheme. Now, obviously, the first help that we can give is to enable the child to be independent. This in itself is not difficult, because the life-force within the child is desirous of expression. But that such independence shall be accompanied by cleanliness, order, right behaviour towards others is a longer work—a gradual ripening and development of the inner life. The observing and directing of these tendencies manifesting in the smallest child calls for love and wisdom on the part of the Directress. She must most carefully distinguish in the first acts of the little child "every manifestation having a useful scope." These are permitted and observed, and those other acts which infringe the rights of others and which cannot in any sense be called "good" must be given either a new direction, or, if harmful, eliminated. But only after some experience does one realise fully the wisdom of Dr. Montessori's statement: "We cannot know the consequences of suffocating a spontaneous action at the time when the child is just beginning to be active: perhaps we suffocate *life itself*. Humanity shows itself in all its intellectual splendour during this tender age as the sun shows itself at dawn and the flower in the first unfolding of its petals; and we must *respect* religiously, reverently, these first indications of individuality. If any educational act is to be efficacious, it will be only that which tends to *help* toward the complete unfolding of this life. To be thus helpful it is necessary rigorously to avoid *the arrest of spontaneous movements and the imposition of arbitrary tasks*. It is, of course, understood that here we do not speak of useless or dangerous acts, for these must be *suppressed, destroyed.*"

After a short while in a Montessori class, even the smallest child will achieve a certain independence which is most moving to witness—although one knows there exists a form of adult egotism which takes the contrary view. Such egotism is heard frequently in such expressions as the following:—"I want to keep him a baby as long as I can," or "I can't bear to see them growing away from me," or "I am not anxious for her to speak plainly; I love her baby talk." These expressions will not bear a moment's clear unselfed thought. Who would deliberately frustrate growth or hinder the physical development of a child? Then why wish to hinder its mental and spiritual development? As a mother takes joy in the cutting of the baby's first tooth, we take our joy, not less, perhaps more, when our children give signs of mental and moral growth. Watch that child who a few weeks ago came to us from the nursery with all the accompanying signs of his immaturity. He couldn't handle without letting fall; he walked with difficulty up the stairs, and frequently stumbled in the musical exercises. His eyes were misty, like the eyes of a calf, with desire for objects useless to him; he had no co-ordination; the consciousness had not come through (an expression of my own, not to be confused with the clear thought and expression of the Dottoressa's); he was unable to express himself, speech was late, and had not been helped. "Hunger and thirst were his emotions bare" and "squawks" conveyed his needs to us. And now, he is growing towards perfection in movement, in speech, in sentiment. He can dust various pieces of the material quite well and continuously; he is beginning to recognise form and colour; he knows the difference between sound and noise. His little hands are acquiring dexterity; he can button and unbutton his jumper, and handle things most carefully. He can ask to go to the lavatory, or to be allowed to wash his hands, to help to put the cloth or the flowers on the table, or to move the various pieces of furniture. He goes to the handkerchief bag, and takes from it one of the pieces of linen which we call handkerchiefs, and after using it he deposits it in the basket provided for that purpose. His sense of tidiness is becoming so keen that the frayed threads from the pieces of linen which sometimes attach to the bag distress him, and he picks them off and puts them in the waste basket too. He makes a good attempt at sweeping the floor; he does certain musical exercises quite well; he resents the suggestion conveyed by adult action that he is a baby to be nursed, and, struggling to free himself, takes refuge in his masculinity, exclaiming with energy: "Me, me? No, no. Rene, Rene," meaning that a tiny girl of his own age shall be subjected, instead of himself, to baby treatment. Rene straightens herself, and also rejects the invitation to be nursed. Only adult egotism could view such conquest on the part of the child with distress or regret. Speaking of the mother who serves her child instead of helping him to learn to serve himself, the Dottoressa says: "She offends the fundamental human dignity of her son, she treats him as if he were a doll, when he is, instead, a man confided by nature to her care." And thus we bear ever in mind the fact that "needless help is an actual hindrance to the development of natural forces." After the child has accustomed himself to his new environment, he begins to settle down to "work" with the Montessori material. Indeed, it is "work" with this material that makes possible the development which I have recorded in the little boy's case. For has not the buttoning frame afforded the practice which has converted that hand from a clumsy,

(Continued at foot of next column.)

the command of his impulse. His fingers are now able to manipulate the buttons and buttonholes on the frame, and on his pinafore, too. The latter act is the application of the newly derived power. Working with the solid in sets, and by the repetition of placing the cylinders in their right apertures, he has learnt to differentiate objects according to thickness and size. In so doing, his attention has been fixed, held for a considerable time, and it is by this inner act of attention that his intelligence has developed. All the achievements which D—— has accomplished within a few weeks are the result of "work" done during that time in this prepared environment. Therefore the child—the subject—has been and is being prepared, too. This calls for an analysis of the material and its purpose.

(To be continued.)

WHATS' ON?

W.S.F. FIXTURES

OUTDOOR

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5th.

Lewisham Market Place, 3 p.m., Mrs. Walker.
Whitmore Head, 3 p.m., Mrs. Bouvier.

INDOOR.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3rd.

Co-operative Hall, King Street, Southall, 3 p.m., Miss Lynch.

Monthly Sunday indoor meetings will be held in the Bow Women's Hall after Christmas, beginning on Sunday, January 20th, 7 p.m. Full particulars later.

The weekly lectures at 29b Lincoln's Inn Fields will be resumed on Thursday, January 24th, 7.30 p.m., when Mr. A. L. Bacharach will speak on "Industrial Unionism" and Mrs. Bouvier on "The Present Outlook."

The Saturday "Great Push" Campaign will be resumed on January 12th, when Stratford will be visited.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

KINGSLEY HALL, Bromley-by-Bow, at 8.15 p.m. Speakers: Sunday, December 30th, Muriel Lester—"The Two Paths. Sunday, January 6th, George Lansbury—"The New Year's Message."

THE IMPRISONMENT OF MISS MARSH.

Miss Marsh, one of the Portsmouth members, has been sent to prison under D.O.R.A.. The local branch of the W.S.F. is endeavouring to raise the legal costs incurred in her trial. Donations to this fund are urgently required, and should be sent to the Hon. Financial Secretary of the W.S.F., Miss Norah Smyth, 400 Old Ford Road, who will transmit them to the local branch. Our sympathies go out to Miss Marsh and the branch.

* * * *

W.S.F. members will join us in sympathy with one of our earliest Poplar members, Daisy Morley, in the loss of her beloved brother, who has been killed in the War.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

FAMILY LIMITATION DOCTRINE. Post free, 1½d. —Malthusian League, Queen Anne's Chambers, Westminster.

SUFFRAGE WORKERS should spend their holidays at "Sea View," Victoria Road, Brighton. Hostess, Miss Turner.

TYPEWRITING REQUIRED at home; MSS. and Plays; Duplicating accurately done. Terms on application.—Apply Miss A. O. Beamish, 85 Hoxton Street.

TWO UNFURNISHED ROOMS TO LET to English wife; rent 5s. weekly; second floor, rooms facing front; children (not more than two) not objected to; Central London.—Apply Box 400, this office.

MONDA SOCIALISMO.

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Songs and Recitals by ALEXANDER HUNTER, 37 Collingwood Road, Coventry.—"Fine Voice." "Powerful Reciter."

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INTERNATIONAL YOUNG AGE PENSIONS.

Dear Friends of Humanity,—Before the storm bursts let us endeavour to place the children and all those who are helpless in comparative safety by securing SEVEN SHILLINGS A WEEK each for them from the State, that we may be free to work for other reforms. At present, whilst they are exposed to cold, poverty and hunger, we can think of nothing else. 7s. a week would ENABLE FAMILIES TO MOVE AT ONCE INTO BETTER HOUSES, and to obtain better milk and food. This would stimulate local trade and reduce expenses of WORKHOUSES, HOSPITALS, PRISONS and LUNATIC ASYLUMS, and do away with all poor rates to such an extent as to be A GREAT SAVING to the taxpayers, and would enable sensible girls to marry where they would otherwise not dare to do so, and to bring up healthy happy children to become stalwart citizens and parents in their turn, besides relieving untold pain and suffering, and being an estimable benefit to the State.

The fact of a married man becoming automatically POORER at the birth of each child constitutes a cruel wrong to all children, and until each child has 7s. a week in its own individual right, as an infant citizen, suffering, war, disease, and poverty can never be abolished. Let us all demand this from the Government now before it may be too late.—

S. MACKENZIE KENNEDY.

Advert.]]

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